



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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## **Don't Let Your Christmas Tree Become a Fire Hazard**

### **California Department of Consumer Affairs Urges Consumers to Prevent Christmas Tree Fires in the Home**

SACRAMENTO -- Charlene Zettel, director of the California Department of Consumer Affairs, today urged consumers to keep fire safety in mind when purchasing and displaying Christmas trees.



"Consumers need to be aware that some Christmas trees are cut a month or more before they arrive at the lot, so they are thirsty and need to be watered," cautioned Zettel.

"You wouldn't bring flowers home and not put them in water. A Christmas tree is the same," commented Sam Minturn, executive director of the California Christmas Tree Association (CCTA).

"And in some cases, it's almost better to have your Christmas tree flocked because the material sprayed on, such as a latex solution called Wilt-Pruf, reduces the rate of drying," said Battalion Chief Niko King, public information officer, Sacramento Fire Department.

To prevent a Christmas tree fire in the home, Zettel suggests consumers keep in mind the following safety tips, recommended by the National Fire Prevention Association ([www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)):

**Lights:** Check your strands of lights to determine the number of strands that may be connected. Connect no more than three strands of push-in bulbs and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.

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## **Christmas Tree Fire Safety**

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**Candles:** Never use lit candles to decorate a tree. Place any candles well away from tree branches.

**Water:** Try to keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water daily.

**Dry Trees:** Safely dispose of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are highly flammable and should not be left in a house or garage, or placed against the house.

**Artificial Trees:** When purchasing an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant.

**Heat Sources:** Make sure the tree is at least three feet (one meter) away from any heat source, such as fireplaces and radiators. Try to position the tree near an outlet so that cords are not running long distances. Do not place the tree where it may block exits.

The National Christmas Tree Association and CCTA list additional safety tips online at [www.christmastree.org/care.cfm](http://www.christmastree.org/care.cfm) and [www.cachristmas.com/facts.html](http://www.cachristmas.com/facts.html) (scroll down to 'What You Can Do'), respectively.

The state association has established a new Tree Fresh Certified Program to ensure consumers purchase the freshest possible Christmas tree. Under the program, association members promise to display cut Christmas trees in water and to answer questions about their care.

The 'Tree Fresh Certified' stamp of approval guarantees consumers are purchasing the freshest possible tree. To find a fresh cut Christmas tree lot location in California, click on [www.cachristmas.com/RetailLotMenu.html](http://www.cachristmas.com/RetailLotMenu.html), email [califcta@aol.com](mailto:califcta@aol.com), or call 800-454-TREES / 209-669-6668.

Remarked Zettel, "If people use precaution, it will help ensure a safe holiday season for everyone."

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